

Twitter for Educators: A Professional Development Workshop

Lesson Plan

OBJECTIVES:

Through this professional development workshop, teachers will be able to:

- ❖ Connect the new literacies perspective to the concept of using social media in schools.
- ❖ Create a Twitter account for professional use.
- ❖ Experiment with using Twitter.
- ❖ Brainstorm various ways to use Twitter as a school, as well as in the classroom.
- ❖ Discuss ideas for approaching administrators who may oppose the idea of social media in the classroom.
- ❖ Access resources providing additional ideas for the educational use of Twitter.

MATERIALS:

- ❖ Twitter for Educators handout
- ❖ Twitter for Educators Prezi
- ❖ Feedback form
- ❖ SMART Board
- ❖ Computers
- ❖ Internet access (www.twitter.com and www.youtube.com must not be blocked)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- ❖ I will begin by introducing myself, describing my background, my teaching certifications, where I currently teach, and finally, my experience using Twitter and other social media applications.
- ❖ I will ask everyone to go around the room and introduce themselves, sharing the same information. Everyone will also be asked to include why they are here and what they hope to gain from this professional development workshop.
- ❖ I will go over the objectives for the professional development workshop with the participants.
- ❖ I will distribute the Twitter for Educators Handout.
- ❖ I will then begin with my presentation, a Prezi titled “Twitter for Educators: Exploring the Role of Social Media in Schools.”
- ❖ I will encourage participants to feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation but I will also provide time at the end of the workshop for a Q&A session.
- ❖ I will begin with explaining the new literacies perspective, describing the central ideas from the 2004 Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack article. In a think-pair-share activity, I will ask everyone to turn to a partner and discuss, from the new

literacies perspective, why educators should incorporate social media into their classrooms and schools.

- ❖ The presentation will provide an overview of social media in schools, including some of the research on this subject from Stewart, 2009, and McWilliam, Hickey, Hines, Conner, & Bishop, 2011.
- ❖ The presentation will provide information about getting started with Twitter, including a YouTube video about Twitter for educators. I will explain that much of the information in the video is provided on their handout, including the links offering additional resources for educators about Twitter.
- ❖ I will provide an overview about the language of Twitter, discussing the way in which social media has created a discourse specific to its users. In order to utilize Twitter effectively, it is important to understand the language that is used on the site.
- ❖ I will discuss considerations when using Twitter, offering the benefits and drawbacks, as well as important factors for educators, such as keeping separate personal and professional accounts for social media.
- ❖ I will then provide some ideas for using twitter in schools, as well as in the classrooms. I will explain that these are listed on the handout and that we will have the opportunity to brainstorm further as a group after experimenting a bit with Twitter.
- ❖ It is now time for the participants to experiment with using Twitter. I will provide a brief walk-through of Twitter, explaining that a step-by-step process for creating an account and using the site is also provided on the handout.
- ❖ I will log into my account, show my profile, followers, and the people I am following. I will show the Twitter feed with all of the tweets from the various people that I follow. I will then demonstrate creating a tweet and utilizing a hashtag.
- ❖ I will then encourage everyone to create a Twitter account, log in, and try it out! Part of the learning process with Twitter is observing what it is all about and then giving it a try. I will circulate the room during this time to provide assistance for those who need it.
- ❖ I will encourage everyone to take a look at the section on their handout titled, Tips for Using Twitter. Try to find your school district, library, or other teachers on Twitter. See what they are tweeting about!
- ❖ Once everyone has had some time to experiment with the site and create a few tweets, I will then go back to the Prezi, picking up where I left off with the presentation.
- ❖ I will ask everyone to begin the brainstorming activity. Using Twitter, we will brainstorm as a group to develop various ideas for using Twitter as a school and in the classroom. Everyone should include the hashtag #schoolstweet so that we can keep track of everyone's ideas.
- ❖ As the handout explains, clicking on the hashtag will allow users to see all of the tweets with the same hashtag.
- ❖ The back of the handout provides space for participants to write down all of the new ideas for using Twitter as educators.

- ❖ I will encourage everyone to check out the resources listed on their handout. These can provide additional ideas for using Twitter in schools and in the classroom.
- ❖ In my Twitter account, projected on the SMART Board, I will follow the hashtag #schoolstweet to keep track of all of the ideas that are generated.
- ❖ I will participate in the brainstorming session by offering the ideas of having students tweet as characters from books, or participating in literature circles via Twitter. I will also offer the ideas of having schools post emergency information or advertise school events on Twitter.
- ❖ I will provide sufficient time for a brainstorming session and any further experimentation with Twitter.
- ❖ Back in the Prezi, will then move to a think-pair-share activity in which participants are asked to consider the following question: What can we do if our school districts prevent access to social media websites? Each group will be asked to share their thoughts and ideas.
- ❖ Finally, I will conduct with a question and answer session. I will open the floor to the participants, encouraging them to ask any lingering questions about the educational use of social media.
- ❖ I will ask everyone to share any additional thoughts about the educational use of Twitter.
- ❖ I will conclude by asking participants to provide feedback about the session. I will distribute the feedback form, asking that they reflect honestly about the experience so that I may improve my future professional development workshops.
- ❖ After collecting the feedback forms, I will thank everyone for their time and wish them the best of luck incorporating Twitter in their classrooms!

REFERENCES:

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- Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts and other powerful web tools for the classroom* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
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